

COMPLAINT FORM

Today's Date

6/1/05
~~5/15/05~~

Student's name

[REDACTED]

Name of individual filing complaint, if different from student(**)

Address 18102 15th Ave NE #310

Shoreline, WA 98155

Telephone number (206) 364-5006

Best time to call during regular business hours: Between 9 am/pm and 5 am/pm.
206-362-1960

I am filing a complaint against the following school:

Name of school Court Reporting Institute

Address 929 N. 130th Street, Suite 2

Seattle, WA. 98133

Telephone number (206) 363-8300

Exact dates of attendance:

Date you entered classes: Aug 1, 1996 Last day of attendance: July 8, 2004

Did you complete the program into which you enrolled? []
yes [] no []

Name of program enrolled in:

Court Reporting

*EXCEPT IN CASES WHERE AN INDIVIDUAL WAS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT, THE AGENCY CANNOT ACT ON COMPLAINTS FILED BY ANOTHER PERSON AND CANNOT DISCUSS A COMPLAINT WITH SUCH OTHER INDIVIDUALS. IN INSTANCES INVOLVING A MINOR, A PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN MUST ACT FOR THE STUDENT.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Please indicate which of the following apply. Show more than one source if tuition/fees are being paid from various sources.

The school has received payment on my account to date of

\$ 20,035 ~~20,035~~ without the interest on student loan
(10,635) EXHIBIT # 24

The source(s) of those payments on my account are:

Funds supplied by myself/family: no outside assistance.

Scholarship award: (Source?) _____

Funds obtained from Federal financial aid grants/loans.

Funds provided by a public agency (DVR, VA, ES, DSHS, other). Please indicate which: _____

Other: Worker's Retraining Program

COMPLAINT CONCERNS: A student may file a complaint if the school has committed an unfair business practice. The following is a list of unfair business practices for which a student can file a complaint. (Check one or more of the following, if applicable, and explain each, in detail, on a separate paper.)

Unfair Business Practices

(1) school failed to comply with the terms of a student enrollment contract or agreement;

____ (2) school represented falsely, directly or by implication, that an educational program is approved by a particular industry or that successful completion of the program qualifies a student for admission to a labor union or similar organization or for the receipt of a state license in any business, occupation, or profession;

____ (3) school represented falsely, directly or by implication, that a student who successfully completes a course or program of instruction may transfer credit for the course or program to any institution of higher education;

(4) school represented falsely, directly or by implication, in advertising or in any other manner, the school's size, location, facilities, equipment, faculty qualifications, or accreditation;

(5) school represented that the school is approved, recommended, or endorsed by the state of Washington or by the agency, except the fact that the school is licensed to operate in the State of Washington;

(6) school provided testimonials, endorsements, or other information which mislead or deceived student regarding current practices of the school, current conditions for employment opportunities, or probable earnings in the occupation for which the education was designed;

(7) school designated or referred to sales representatives as "counselors," "advisors," or similar terms which have the tendency to mislead or deceive prospective students regarding the authority or qualifications of the sales representatives;

(8) school made or caused to be made any statement or representation in connection with the offering of education if the school or agent knows or reasonably should have known the statement or representation to be false, substantially inaccurate, or misleading;

(9) school engaged in methods of advertising, sales, collection, credit, or other business practices which are false, deceptive, misleading, or unfair, as determined by the agency.

YOUR COMPLAINT:

Have you tried to resolve your complaint with the school?

Yes No On what date? See complaint

Whom did you contact? Name See complaint

Title _____

What was the outcome after discussions with school officials?

I quit!

Please describe, in order, the events, dates, and names relating to your complaint.
(Use additional paper if necessary).

See attached

What you want to happen to satisfy your complaint?

*See attached Exhibit
A*

NOTE: IF CLAIMING A REIMBURSEMENT, the agency must obtain evidence that you enrolled in/paid money to the subject school. Please attach copies of your enrollment agreement,, receipts for payment(s) made, canceled check(s), money order receipt(s), etc. This could include: tuition charges, registration fees, transportation costs to/from school, purchase cost of required: insurance, books, supplies, equipment, uniforms and protective clothing or devices, lab and other related user fees or rental charges

Document your discussions and correspondence and collect all relevant information such as copies of school catalogs, advertisements, contract and brochures. Forward copies of any supportive documents to us with your complaint.

CERTIFY UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON THAT THE FOREGOING INFORMATION AND/OR ATTACHED EXHIBITS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

Date 6/1/05 ^{*me*} ~~5/15/05~~ Place WA Seattle
(City where signed)


(Print or Type Name)


(Signature)

Exhibit
A

WHAT COURT REPORTING INSTITUTE OWES ME

\$100	Registration fee
\$35,000	<i>Student loans, capitalized and consolidated – OR WHATEVER THE PAYOFF IS AS OF THE DATE THIS IS SETTLED!</i>
\$4,000	Equipment – please see Exhibit #16
\$1,000	Actual <i>cost</i> of first steno machine – a manual machine that had been adapted to be computer compatible
\$200	Steno machine repairs and maintenance while in school done by OTEC and another outside vendor (not the repairs done through CRI)
\$800	Books and supplies, tape players and tapes, floppy discs, batteries, ribbons, book bags, etc., from vendors other than CRI
\$250	Steno paper purchased from vendor other than CRI
\$95	“Typing Tutor” – a program for my home PC to get through typing class
\$8750	Transportation costs for <i>eight years of school</i> – a very conservative estimate

\$50, 195 *

****Plus I retain the right to add anything else I may be able to prove before this is settled that was a legitimate expense while in school***

And if I have to get a lawyer involved, I will indeed ask for damages in addition to the above itemized expenses

To: Workforce Training and Education Coordination Board

My name is [REDACTED] and I started school at the Court Reporting Institute (CRI) in Seattle, WA, in August of 1996 when I was 46 years old. I spent eight years as a full-time, year-around student and \$50,000 diligently pursuing an education with CRI. Now, at the age of 54, I have no credentials to show for my efforts, no career prospects or viable skills as a court reporter, and I am burdened in debt. All of this is a direct result of CRI drastically misrepresenting the educational opportunities available through their school and renegeing on the contract I entered into to provide me with the skills to obtain a license to work as a court reporter.

I desperately need your help salvaging what's left of the remainder of these later years of my life. In 1996 I left a successful position that I held for 22 years in Spokane as a unit coordinator for a pediatric oncology and intensive care unit of a large hospital to attend CRI in Seattle. I chose CRI because of the purported quality of the education – specifically asking about and seeking out the National Court Reporter's Association (NCRA) approved educational program they were said to have in place, and the career opportunities repeatedly promised by their staff and advertised throughout their school literature – despite the higher cost of their institution compared to similar schools in the Seattle area. For eight years I studied hard, and for awhile even worked two jobs to support my education, all the while looking forward to graduation when I could take up my new career – a career that was never possible for me to attain through CRI. Almost a decade of my life has been taken from me by CRI's deceptive business practices – a time when I should be earning substantially more than my current position and without the onerous debt I find myself under.

I contend that CRI misrepresented their school in the following ways:

1. CRI provided false information regarding their graduation rate, placement rate, and the time it would take students to graduate.
2. CRI gave false information about the skills necessary to become a court reporter, and the costs to be incurred both as part of their school and upon graduation.
3. CRI misled their students regarding the NCRA and ACICS accreditation standards the school followed, and additionally misled accreditation agency representatives regarding the type of education that was being taught at the school.

Additionally, there was a huge disparity between the education promised by CRI and the education I ultimately received through the school. CRI drastically misrepresented the teaching practices of their school to such a degree that it bears little resemblance to that promised by the contract I signed, the offerings in the school catalog, or their own advertisements. This took the form of the following:

4. CRI advertised courses and instruction in the court reporting program that were not actually offered, classes they had no specialized material or equipment for teaching, or taught these courses at a level where a student could not potentially learn them at any kind of professional level needed for graduation or securing employment.
5. CRI consistently employed student teachers or self-taught classes to a degree not supported by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) standards body, of which CRI was initially a member when I began attending and whose standards CRI consistently claimed to be teaching at, even after losing their accreditation.
6. CRI classes were run by unqualified staff or by staff members who rotated through class at a rate that is unacceptable among any reasonable educational standards.
7. Despite a lack of real learning or educational progress, CRI continually moved students (myself included) ahead to the next level of instruction – whether they were able to demonstrate the needed skill level or not.
8. CRI completely changed the theoretical foundation of their entire educational approach several years after I started my education, but offered no retraining to students taught under the old method, and provided no method for these students – including myself – to succeed.
9. Critical components of an education for court reporting – medical and legal terminology – were taught inadequately and unprofessionally.
10. Instruction on Computer Aided Transcription (CAT) software was completely inadequate, despite being a key and essential tool used daily in any court reporting position.
11. CRI misrepresented the basic typing instruction and training provide by their school.

In the following pages I will cover each of these allegations in turn and provide supporting documentation where appropriate.

1. CRI provided false information regarding their graduation rate, placement rate, and the time it would take students to graduate.

When I first decided to begin training as a court reporter and began visiting potential schools I met with Tom Fielding, Director of Admissions with CRI. At the time Mr. Fielding claimed CRI consistently graduated a high number of students faster than their competition (Green River Community College) even if they were more expensive, but the benefits of earning a high wage sooner were greater than the higher upfront educational cost. However, 90% of CRI students from that time period have never finished the course through graduation, and fewer still finished to graduate in the 30 month timeline allotted. In fact, some graduates of the school never pass the state or national test necessary to become a court reporter, primarily due to the poor educational instruction and preparation received through CRI.

In CRI's promotional literature and in person, the school advertises that the court reporter course is typically a 30-month program (see the 1995 CRI contract, attached – Exhibit #1). However, this timeline was not accurate even at the time I signed my contract in 1995, which the school had knowledge of since they'd been in operation since 1988 at that point.

Additionally, CRI claims a placement rate of 100% in places such as the acknowledgement section of its 2003 contract. (Exhibit #2) Yet this number is substantially misleading. The 2003 contract states the completion rate for students starting education in 1996 (when I started) was 14.2%, with only 7.6% completing "within the stated program length." Those beginning in 1997 had an even more dismal record, a completion rate of 3.5%, with a 2.3% completion rate within the stated 30-month timeline. None of these rates were published or available to me within the 1995 contract. Given these exceptionally low completion rates, prominently advertising a high placement rate is misleading because few if any students actually graduated, so a high placement rate does not accurately reflect the prospects of CRI's student body.

Finally, CRI referenced in their contract and their advertising that the timeline for graduation for students was 30 months. As seen above, few students ever graduated at this pace; I was enrolled full time at CRI for eight years, year around, with only three breaks that totaled nine months over that eight-year period – with no graduation even on the horizon when I quit. As I discovered recently, CRI had already been warned by the Workforce Board about advertising this misleading timeline. In a letter dated October 5, 2001, sent to CRI student Bente Strangeland-Mullaly, your agency confirms that CRI was previously cited for its misleading 30-month course timeline in 1999, and that accusations of impropriety regarding financial aid were sent to the Education Department (Exhibit 3). **This begs the question of why all of CRI's student contracts were not immediately reviewed by the Workforce Board and/or students notified by the Workforce Board of the gross misrepresentation that they were obviously aware of at that time – and just as importantly - why no follow-up was done by the Workforce Board to insure they were in compliance – even though it is promised in the letter.**

2. CRI gave false information about the skills necessary to become a court reporter, and the costs to be incurred both as part of their school and upon graduation.

CRI consistently misrepresented the skill level required to work in this field. For example, during my interview with Mr. Fielding he explained that students performing at a speed of 160-180 words per minute could find work in the court reporting field before they even graduated or became licensed. This was a patently untrue statement - given that a 225 WPM level was required for graduation of CRI, and even a 180 WPM rate is drastically below acceptable standards for court reporting requirements for licensure by the state, which is 200 WPM.

During my enrollment with CRI, one of the school's catalogs advertised Carl Beck, a current instructor, (former approximate ten-year CRI student) as a Certified Court Reporter - without an addendum saying that by his own admission, in order to attain that certification, he had to abandon his inadequate CRI training and purchase a voice recognition system and then teach himself that method of reporting at home in order to pass that state exam. The natural and logical assumption of anyone reading that catalog was that he had done it on a steno machine – as this is a steno type school - not a voice writing school. (Please see Exhibit #4.) Another graduate, Douglas Bozarth, successfully completed the CRI

program after devoting most of his daytime and evening hours for seven years to his training, but to date has been unable to pass an exam after numerous attempts at both state and national levels. Another former student, Philip Campbell, also met graduation requirements while I was there, but to my knowledge, has never been able to pass either test.

CRI also regularly failed to disclose the true costs of attending their school. The contract I signed was a 1995 contract; however I was not given a catalog until 1996 because of my start date (despite what they have you initial at the contract signing). In 1996, CRI implemented lab fees and erroneously charged me for these costs despite the fact that they were not included as part of my 1995 contract. It took months of negotiations for these charges to finally be removed. At one point, CRI attempted to get me to sign a new contract to justify the charges until finally the school was forced to recognize that these charges were not enforceable given the contract I originally signed. See Exhibit #5 for lab charges and Exhibit #6 for letters to and from Alen Janisch after phone and personal attempts to contact him failed numerous times over many weeks.

Additionally, during my initial meeting with Mr. Fielding, he used a variety of hard-sell techniques to entice me to sign up immediately, such as pushing me to sign right then by giving him a \$100 application fee, and to "lock in" a lower tuition rate and class availability - when in reality, the class sizes never filled up. (And they would have nailed chairs to the ceiling if they could get students eligible for Title 4 funding to fill those seats.) At that point, I assumed I knew approximately what the full price of my education would be. Ultimately, the necessary equipment for my training cost me more than \$4,000, costs that weren't covered or explained prior to my signing a contract with CRI. See attached receipts for laptop, computer-compatible steno machine, CAT software, etc. (Exhibit #7).

3. CRI continually misled their students regarding the accreditation standards the school followed, and additionally misled accreditation agency representatives regarding the type of education that was being taught at the school.

At the time I signed a contract with CRI they were a member school of NCRA (National Court Reporters Association) and advertised that they offered NCRA approved training. The school also advertised they were accredited by ACICS (Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools), and logos for both groups appeared on their school catalog (Exhibit #8). CRI subsequently dropped or was dropped by NCRA sometime after 1999 and notified students of this in an open assembly. However, in this assembly school officials said that losing NCRA accreditation really only reduced the number of tests needed to pass, and it was pitched as a benefit to their students. Additionally, CRI continued to claim that they taught at an NCRA approved level, but this was not the case. In fact, CRI did not teach the NCRA minimum standards even prior to their losing their certification, which is most likely the reason for the lost accreditation. This took place during the period of time I had contracted to receive my specifically sought-out NCRA approved education.

To maintain their accreditation status with ACICS, CRI was visited and evaluated by ACICS committee representatives. During these periods, CRI would address long-standing facilities problems just in time for their review. Computers and chairs in the lab were only repaired or replaced when a review was pending, at which point new books were also purchased for their "library" - which consisted of a very small bookcase at the front desk, and restrooms were brought up to at least 75% working status.

During accreditation review preparations, staff evaluations were requested from students. However, normally school directors would regularly intimidate students and discourage the airing of complaints - either by avoidance of contact or just plain rudeness or abruptness. But during staff evaluations, director Sandra Metz would oversee the filling out of these reports by waiting in the room for them to be done, even visiting with some of the students at the same time, and then pick them up individually from students instead of allowing for anonymous feedback to be given. Also, a staff member interrupted my private discussion with the accreditation staff during the last inspection, presenting a very intimidating environment.

In terms of following ACICS accreditation guidelines, there were numerous instances where CRI violated these standards despite claiming to be ACICS compliant. Tests were not reviewed by instructors as a normal part of class or after class, extra assistance on typing and/or stenography were rarely offered - and then only if a student insisted, students frequently taught other students, and unqualified staff regularly taught classes with no supervision. Please see Exhibit #21, portion of 2003 ACICS inspection

report. It appears the committee just read things from the school catalog and decided that was good enough for them, or took the school's word for things without actual follow-up on some of the stated facts. There has never been a time in the history of CRI when 25 students passed the state exam – not ever. In fact, what was typical was to have 1 or maybe 2 students pass in a given year, and sometimes, not even that. Please read entire exhibit for other highlights.

As a final note, an announcement was made to students during an assembly around 2003 by Leanne Hobbs, director, that the owner of CRI – Alen Janisch – had secured a place on the ACICS accreditation board. While she maintained that he would not be reviewing his own schools, ACICS has refused to provide information on what role Mr. Janisch actually plays on the board (Exhibit #9), and the appearance of a conflict of interest was alarming to myself and other students, and discouraged us from reporting violations for fear of our comments being brought to Mr. Janisch and the repercussions this might have upon our educational and/or graduation prospects.

- 4. CRI advertised courses and instruction that were not actually offered, or taught these courses at a level where a student could not potentially learn them at a professional level needed for graduation or securing employment.**

Despite advertising that a CRI education would prepare me for careers as a scopist, captioner, medical transcriptionist or CART, the reality was that we were only taught how to write on a stenograph machine and take testimony. All of these other disciplines require distinct training that was not offered at CRI, including the creation of special dictionaries that can take years to build and the use of other specialized software. But these careers were advertised as attainable based on the training CRI offered in basic machine shorthand (Exhibits #10 & 11 – website advertising and mass mailer).

- 5. CRI consistently employed students as teachers or self-taught classes to a degree not supported by the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) standards body, of which CRI was initially a member when I began attending and whose standards level CRI consistently claimed to be teaching at, even after losing their accreditation.**

In the NCRA General Requirements and Minimum Standards Handbook, on page 16 it states: "currently enrolled students shall not teach other students machine shorthand." And it does not say in theory classes only. (Exhibit #12) Even during the period where CRI claimed NCRA membership, the school predominantly ran self-taught classes and classes taught by unsupervised student staff. Yet CRI listed only court reporters and college-degreed instructors on their staff and did not state that classes would be taught by students or via audio tape (Exhibit #13 and #14 from CRI catalogs). The reality of education within the CRI system was that the majority of learning was done by students dictating to other students from books in class, or from machine dictation via the Stenowave system, and these tapes were typically of very poor quality, incorrectly timed, produced by people with thick southern accents that were very difficult to understand, and by people without elementary school level vocabularies at times. In fact, no new tapes were ever provided after the initial set was purchased, despite being told from the outset that others were on the way.

- 6. CRI courses were run by unqualified staff or by staff members who rotated through class at a rate that is unacceptable among any educational standards.**

In my first year with CRI, during beginning theory classes we were often left to "self teach," though we were extremely unfamiliar with the steno machine due to our inexperience, and didn't understand the theory required to learn transcription techniques. During these classes, it was all taped dictation from our own Walkman with a cassette tape, and teaching ourselves techniques to use on a machine from a book! During classes when no instructor was present, a member of administration would show up for the first few minutes of class to take attendance before we were left alone for the remainder of the class to study by ourselves. I am referring to the periods of time when our five-hour a day theory classes were held with no instruction or supervision because our regular instructor, Kim Girgus, herself a new court reporter, was away doing depositions at various law firms to build up her clientele and paycheck. Consequently, she missed between 8 to 10 classes for paying jobs during that time – while we paid for her instruction. No offer was ever made to reduce tuition, however. When Kim was absent, after attendance was taken by Leanne Naslund or Sandra Metz, students were instructed to hold questions until the next time that Kim was available.

Most times, qualified instructors were simply never provided for speed building classes. From approximately the summer of 1999 and well into 2001, during my 120-140 WPM speed building evening training classes, we went through at least 20 different instructors, many of them fellow students or others who were not qualified to teach. None of the names of these instructors was found in material furnished to me by the Workforce Board when I requested it, so obviously the Board was not notified of their positions with the school. These instructors included Roseane Smith, a fellow student whom students asked the administration to remove for unprofessional behavior (Exhibit 15); Tony Roller, a brand new student; Sandra, a woman who was sent by the unemployment office and who was hopeful that work at CRI would look good to her case worker; a former failed CRI student named Christy; existing students Sherrilyn Schneider, Rona Walsh, Marsha Beck, Donna Hunter, Judy Forbes, and another barely eighteen year old new student named Kasey; the front desk daytime receptionist who was also a student in the evenings; and another former failed student, Twilla Hurzta. Additionally, a student named Karlynn taught the 80-100 WPM daytime speed building class. These are names of about 13 instructors I had during that time period – the others I simply don't recall as they were but a flash in the pan – but I know there were at least 20 because I kept track on a notebook. None were court reporters at the time I had them, until Donna Hunter finally got her license later on during that same period.

7. Despite a lack of real learning or educational progress, CRI continually moved students ahead to the next level of instruction, yet without teaching the skills necessary to graduate.

The purpose of any educational system is first and foremost to teach its students. Lack of mastery of the material should mean that students are given additional instruction and do not advance to the next level until the foundations of their education have been learned. In keeping with their original theory of transcription, I was progressed through my theory class to the speed class despite only being able to write at 40 WPM. The course catalog, however, specified that students should leave theory with the ability to work at 60 WPM. I was repeatedly reassured that I was doing great and continually told to "build speed and learn to clean up writing mistakes later."

Throughout my first years within CRI, I received positive progress reports. In fact, I barely finished theory within the time frame allotted by my financial aid, I was pushed and told to move onto the next classes even though I didn't really possess adequate skills yet. I regularly expressed concern to my theory teacher, specifically Kim Girgus, that I didn't have an adequate foundation to build speed on, but I was told that I just "lacked confidence" (see progress report, Exhibit #16). Repeated attempts to meet with faculty to discuss my lack of progress were downplayed as "normal" jitters about speed building.

However, when it came time to demonstrate the progress demanded by financial aid, many methods were used to give the appearance that I was operating at a much higher level than in reality. These included surreptitious "slow" tests used to meet certain financial aid target requirements. All tests are supposed to be taped to compare the actual speed of reading versus the intended speed, and to assist in correction. When financial aid was threatened by inadequate progress, a "slow" test was sometimes conducted. (See Exhibit #17 a note to the instructor informing them that financial aid was at risk and help was needed to achieve that status.) This meant that instructors deliberately read at less than the required speed, and consequently many students suddenly met the appropriate level of progress necessary to keep receiving financial aid. Despite the taping requirement, when these slow tests were given, often by the same instructor during my earlier years – Mysisqua Murdock - (another failed CRI student and personal friend and fellow student with Alen Janisch and Leanne Naslund during their failed court reporting educational years) – the instructor always seemed to "forget" to tape the session. While I could sometimes pass the tests required to maintain my level of financial aid, I regularly failed tests that were not used for aid evaluation, yet were read at the rate that I was supposedly required to master to receive this aid. I expressed my concerns about this to Leanne Naslund very early on at CRI, who claimed to investigate my allegations and found that the test speeds were acceptable, even when there was no tape to review. And I was completely and totally ignored by both Leanne and Mysisqua for at least a year after my complaint – a frequently used intimidation technique.

Ultimately, when students such as myself were unable to meet the speed requirements necessary to pass a class before the next financial aid deadline hit, we were instructed to write down why we thought we weren't progressing, and these letters would be reviewed so the school might be able to "waiver" us through – a discretion we were told was left up to Alen Janisch. Yet these admissions of failure were never followed up upon, and no attempts were made to provide additional assistance to get our speed up

to acceptable levels before the next deadline. While they did not take our hands and force us to write them, they let us know in no uncertain terms that we would have to pay out of our own pockets instead of getting financial aid if we were not successfully "waived through." I once went to get my financial aid paperwork taken care of and asked about the status of my pending waiver. The woman working in financial aid didn't even seem to understand the term waiver, and said my check was already there.

Beyond the testing requirements, accuracy was consistently sacrificed for speed building. We were regularly told to work for speed, and we had no reviews of machine shorthand notes after our initial theory classes even though precise machine shorthand is critical for accurate transcription. Meanwhile, punctuation checks were done only upon special request, and usually done by fellow students and not instructors. In general, attendance seemed to be the primary requirement for students, as opposed to accomplishment. Counseling of students with issues was never tailored to our particular problem. For every complaint about accuracy, speed or theory problems, we were prescribed more finger drills, fast track drills, writing with a metronome, and later on in my case, theory review. These solutions didn't work since we were already doing these things and our problems were not being resolved. Those of us who were still not progressing after 3 years were presumed to be malingering and lacking motivation, despite completing all the work suggested and required by the school. Requests for extra help or classes for students struggling with the same or similar issues were ignored and I was told that all concerns were already worked into the training in future speed building classes. What this meant was that despite my poor performance and lack of progression, I would continually be given progress reports high enough to keep me moving through the program and receiving financial aid, but never high enough to realistically and competently complete the program or successfully graduate.

- 8. CRI completely changed the theoretical foundation of their entire educational approach to court reporting in about 1999, but offered no retraining to students taught under the old method, and provided no method for these students – including myself – to succeed.**

Just before midway through my educational experience at CRI, the school opted to move to a new foundational theory called Phoenix, which emphasized clean writing over speed when learning transcription (see Exhibit #18 for theory description and foundation.) While I have no problems with a school continually seeking the best teaching approach and updating their methods, this new theory ran completely opposite from the previous method CRI followed - which emphasized speed over accuracy, with the assumption that accuracy would magically be acquired later once you had speed. Consequently, students such as myself who had already advanced beyond theory courses and had been in speed building for some years at the point of change, were told to keep building speed and work on accuracy later, despite the school's apparent belief that this theory was no longer the correct approach to teaching these skills. Because of this switch, we also no longer had access to any of the books or tapes previously used for the older theory instruction, as I was told by Sandra Metz that these tapes and books had been removed and disposed of – despite the fact that most of the students in the school at that time were still using the old method of theory. Instead we were expected to continue to practice under the older theory using tools specifically designed to support the newer theory of transcription teaching – a theory emphasizing accuracy when mine had already been seriously impaired by speed building.

- 9. Critical components of an education for court reporting – medical and legal terminology – were taught inadequately and unprofessionally.**

The CRI catalog has the stated objective to "attain shorthand speeds of 225 words a minute on the stenograph machine using legal and medical terms and to learn courtroom procedures." (See Exhibit #19) A laudable goal and one required for work in this field, but the reality was that medical and legal classes consisted of rote memorization of medical and legal prefixes, suffixes and root words. No time was set aside to practice writing these words on the machines, despite the fact that these terms and an ability to accurately capture them are essential for proficiency in court reporting. On rare occasions when medical or dense legal material was read during speed building classes, it was always read very slowly because of the difficulty of picking these words up, and we were never brought up to a speed that approached the requirement outlined in their own materials. Despite Alen's response to a prior complainant that medical and legal dictation were regularly scheduled events at CRI, a contention he backed up by sending a class schedule, that was not the reality of the situation. Instructors ran the Stenowave for the most part, and any medical or legal dictation was rare. Schedules were for examining boards to peruse. Consequently, I chose to test out of the medical and legal terminology classes and passed both tests easily with an "A" since no machine writing was required.

10. Instruction on Computer Aided Transcription (CAT) software was completely inadequate, despite being a key and vital daily tool used in any court reporter position.

The CRI catalog states the following in regard to the importance of real-time and Computer Aided Transcription (CAT):

"The objectives of this portion of the class are to provide students with up-to-date training in the latest technology available to the court reporting industry; to develop students' understanding of and familiarity with the principles of operation involved in computer-aided transcription; and to provide students with hands-on experience to develop mastery of computer-aided transcription in order to enhance and optimize their skills for entry into their court reporting career." (Exhibit #20)

CRI provides one course on CAT that is taught by Sandra Metz, and students are not allowed to even participate in this course until working at the 160-180 WPM level. In comparison, the transcription course run by Green River Community College teaches it from theory classes onward – an absolute necessity when you are learning how your writing is actually translating – as well as necessary to build your dictionaries. Despite its importance to our development, CAT was not adequately taught with the CRI system. The class taught by Ms. Metz consisted of the instructor reading the CAT manual to the classroom. Ms. Metz was not herself proficient in CAT, and consequently was unable to assist us with any issues that weren't specifically covered in the manual. Ms. Metz later admitted that she wanted to get "updated" on the software but hadn't had a chance to do it because she was so busy with other things. (The class was only offered every couple of years, so it was a very lame excuse, at best.)

Additionally, CRI's CAT instruction took place on outdated versions of the software from Stenograph. While CRI had the latest version of the software, they hadn't bothered to install it. In order to learn the latest version, I personally, with the help of another student, had to get a Stenograph representative to come into our class and teach a "how to" session for us. When I first requested that we get assistance from Stenograph, I was told that CRI would not allow a representative to come in because LeAnne and Sandra – the instructors – had not learned how to use the new software yet. In an attempt to get me to quit asking, I was also told by Leanne Naslund that "CRI is not in the business of selling software" as her reasoning for not allowing them to give a class at CRI – but they didn't know how to teach it to us themselves, and we were being charged for the instruction! After following up repeatedly, I was finally given permission to have the rep contact the school and they allowed her to come in, which was the only way we learned even the rudiments of the new software.

According to the latest 2003 accreditation Program Evaluation of CRI, students "master skills involving courtroom procedures including swearing in witnesses, marking exhibits, and computer-aided transcription." (Exhibit #21- A). It took more than eight weeks of classes Sandra taught to produce one miniscule transcript apiece using CAT – and that was the extent of our "mastery" of the system. CAT produced transcripts are the bread and butter of the court reporting profession – you get paid by the number of pages you produce in this field! After the class, no further transcripts were required using the CAT system while you were in school. You went right back to using the old word processor as soon as you were done with the class because you really didn't know how to use the CAT software. To my knowledge, CRI has never had a rep in again and continues to teach the use of this software primarily by reading the manual aloud to the classroom.

11. CRI misrepresented the basic typing class instruction and training provide by their school.

The fundamental nature of transcription involves a comfort level with the keyboard. The 1996 course catalog (Exhibit #22- page 29) states that enrolling with the school "Assumes familiarity with the keyboard. Students will have access to a typing tutor prior to class to assure this familiarity. This will accelerate the learning process in class." While I was familiar with the keyboard, I sought out a tutor to help me master these basics to aid in my education. What I found out was that the typing tutor was not an actual tutor, but a book called "Typing Tutor" - a basic drill book! Furthermore, the only time faculty was present in typing classes was for two five minute tests administered at the end of each class. In fact, tests were sometimes administered by Hazel Mendoza, the front desk receptionist. There was no typing instructor of any type – period. Interestingly, people with no typing experience at all are enrolled in CRI and totally had to teach themselves how to type with no help whatsoever from anyone other than their friends at school – so much for assuming familiarity with the keyboard.

Additionally, equipment in the lab was described in the 1996 catalog as "a fully equipped typing/word processing center" (Exhibit #23, page 3). In reality, computers were frequently broken for months on end, all lacked a mouse peripheral to navigate with, and for the 12-person class we only had four plastic props available to hold up our drill books. In the end, students were forced to use coats, books, and any other bulky item to prop up drill books for practice. Ultimately, I ended up purchasing a typing tutorial software from Radio Shack to practice with at home because of lack of instruction and decent or modern equipment in the classroom.

All of my issues with the poor quality of education I was receiving came to a head in 2004. After requesting additional assistance from Sandra Metz to learn how to become a CART writer, and being told CRI had nothing in the way of material or instructional aids to assist me with that discipline, she told me all you had to do to become a CART writer was build a good dictionary and write accurately and cleanly! This was told to me after years of being told to basically flail for speed! I have a friend who is a CART writer and that is not the only thing you need to know to be a CART writer! I was incensed with their lack of instruction and deliberate deceit about what they did and didn't teach by then. I asked for and was finally granted permission to work independently on fast track drills and building up a dictionary, as well as working with the Stenograph Corporation representatives to learn their software over my cell phone in an empty room of the school during class time. When I rejoined the 160 WPM class, I was told I was making good progress. It was at this point that Mike Stiles, then director of CRI, requested a meeting with me.

I arrived for the meeting that ended up lasting over two hours – during which time Sandra Metz was present intermittently, as she was also teaching a class at the same time. Mr. Stiles accused me of airing my grievances about my education to newer CRI students, although he was unwilling to say what those grievances were or who had made the accusation. He demanded the names of other students I spoke with frequently in class. The irony of this was that I had been working alone in a classroom for the last several months in an effort to improve my performance, which dramatically limited my interactions with other students; Sandra knew this and did not say one word in my defense until I reminded her of it. However, Mr. Fielding didn't seem to be aware of my status within the school system at all or what I was doing – though he told me initially that he had reviewed my entire student file prior to calling the meeting – something I felt he thought was intimidating.

During the meeting I told Mr. Fielding that I felt the real problem was that CRI didn't have any answers for students such as myself who had been at the school for years past the advertised 30-month course timeline, and had no roadmap or even lesson plans for us to follow to reach graduation – and we were an embarrassment to the school. I brought up many of the same allegations I've outlined here with Mr. Fielding, who refused to address these concerns with any honesty at all. I then specifically asked him if CRI still sold this school as a 30-month course, and Mr. Fielding's reply was "absolutely." He explained that variations in the time taken to graduate were covered by noting them in the contract and catalog and went on to demonstrate his sales pitch for me. More details can be given to the board regarding that meeting and what was said.

Then I asked Mr. Fielding if CRI could just restructure the program to make it more realistically represented, and he replied "I am in the business of selling schooling for dollars, not babysitting people who are unwilling to do what it takes to get a good paying career instead of just another job – some of whom are content to vegetate in a school setting." When I pressed him on the unrealistic timeline for graduation he responded "We wouldn't get one new student if we told them how long it could take – of course I'm going to put a good spin on it."

During this meeting I also asked him about the exorbitant lab and dictation fees CRI was charging monthly to students who were not under the 1995 contract, on top of the nearly \$30,000 the school cost, and Mr. Fielding replied that the lab and dictation fees were an incentive to get students out of school faster – NO MENTION OF THE FACT IT DEMONSTRATED A VESTED INTEREST FOR CRI TO HANG ON TO THESE STUDENTS FOREVER!

Finally, Mr. Fielding asked what it would take to "assist" me to get out of school. Note that he did not ask what it would take for me to graduate or become a court reporter or a CART writer, just to assist me to get out of the school. Keep in mind that after eight years this was the first time in my history with CRI that

Replace "Fielding" with "Stiles"

someone offered to provide help to me that I hadn't had to specifically ask for – and I let him know that. At my request, arrangements were made to have Sandra Metz read and review my machine shorthand notes and tell me what my problem areas were so I could correct them – something that was never done above the theory level when I was in school. (Knowing what I know now, it was an abomination that it was not done regularly.) And I said I specifically wanted her to tutor me, personally, as she was the only staff member who ever had been licensed as a court reporter.

My meeting with Sandra established five sets of exercises (20 min each of fast track drills, speed plus drills, finger drills, writing for speed, and hard copy). I was to correct all notes myself, and then pass these to Sandra for review once a week, in addition to continue attending classes. And she in turn was to further correct them, making note of any shadowing or poor stoking or consistent problems she was seeing, and give them back to me. I did 40 minutes each of the required exercises the first time to demonstrate my diligence in desiring to make progress, and submitted them to Sandra for review. But out of concern that my work might not actually get reviewed, I took a red marker and wrote a large note in the middle of the machine steno notes that said "When you come to this note, please pull it out and give it back to me so I will know you are reading my notes, Sandra."

A week later I finally caught up with Sandra, and she said the notes "were fine" and that I should just keep doing what I was doing. She didn't mention the note I inserted, which made me sure that she hadn't actually read through my materials. When I asked for the notes back, she was in a hurry and said she would give them to me later. So I submitted a second set of exercises that were of a shorter length, in case the sheer amount of material had prevented Sandra from getting through it all. Again, I placed a large red note within the material telling her it was her last chance to notify me that she was actually reading and correcting the notes as agreed by tearing out the section and returning it; otherwise I'd know she was not reviewing any of my notes.

Once again I found Sandra, looked her directly in the eye for any signs of evasiveness, and again she said all looked fine and that I should keep up the good work. When I asked her for the notes back to see her corrections, I was told the notes had been "accidentally thrown out when she was cleaning her office." I guess I then knew it was a hopeless case to continue trying to get an education out of them – they were not only unable to give a competent education – they were unwilling to even go through the motions of looking like they were trying.

I was finally promised help from the school after an eight year struggle, and this promise was completely given in bad faith. I never had a discipline, attitude, or any other onerous problem while I was their student. Once Sandra's clear unwillingness to help me became evident, I asked for a leave of absence, and it was later during this time of reflection that I decided to quit CRI for good. I was discouraged and dispirited, and appalled that I had spent so much time and money striving for an education with CRI with nothing to show for it. It was at this point that I began to diligently research CRI and the experiences of other students. I learned that other long-term students were also called into Mr. ~~Fielding's~~ ^{Stiles} office, then confronted and intimidated in the same rude and insulting way he confronted me. They also were made to feel that lack of progress was their fault – not in any way the fault of the school. In my opinion, there was an effort underway to get long-term students who no longer qualified for financial aid, and were not paying lab and dictation fees like myself due to the age of my contract, as well as becoming an embarrassment to the school, to quit the school, myself included.

I have been badly used by CRI. I am not a young woman with limitless chances to start my life anew. CRI was my attempt at a fresh start. I sold my home in Eastern Washington to come to Seattle for school, and my savings has been depleted paying for an education I never received. I left a job I held for 22 years with good benefits, including retirement. If CRI had delivered the education that they promised I would be five years into my new career. Now I face the prospect of paying for this folly for the next 20 years, a reduced income, and the loss of retirement benefits that I left behind to study at CRI. I will be 75 years old by the time my student loans are paid.

I have been devastated by my experiences with CRI almost beyond my ability to cope. I came to CRI as a hard worker and a good student. I earned a 4.0 GPA in college and I successfully tested out of four courses at CRI – Legal Terminology 1 & 2, and Medical Terminology 1 & 2. I've always believed that if you work hard you'll be rewarded in life – but most particularly, in a school setting. All I wanted from CRI were the tools that I could use to get a job as a court reporter. But CRI never gave me the chance to succeed. It is this fact, among the many other reprehensible acts committed by CRI, of which I am the

most ashamed. It has always been my sincere desire to master the profession of court reporting or CART writing. I had the will and the desire to succeed, but I was never given the opportunity. Instead, I was used and abused by a company whose sole purpose was perverted from providing its students with a viable education to enriching itself at our expense. I was lied to by company representatives and promotional materials in order to enroll with CRI, and the company consistently and repeatedly misrepresented the educational experiences available to me at CRI. While I should have been given skills for a new career, instead I was treated as a financial resource and discarded when I was no longer useful – when I no longer had money or the availability of more loans. It took eight years to get to that point, and now I'm left with nothing but broken promises, no professional prospects, and serious fiscal insecurity.

I am turning to you, the Workforce Board, for justice in my particular situation – and not just some token \$3,000 refund by Alen Janisch as has been offered to students in the past. This school has demonstrated a clear, persistent, and repetitive pattern of unfair business practices, they have been cited previously on more than one occasion, and I for one am tired of it being allowed to continue with just little intermittent slaps on the wrist. I am asking you to do your job diligently and protect the students and taxpaying public from this place, as they have literally plundered students and taxpayers to the tune of millions of dollars over the years. The way that CRI has run their school borders on criminal, and at a minimum, I want satisfaction and recompense for the costs I've incurred, totaling over \$50,000 at present and possibly more in the future as interest accrues on my school loans (see Exhibits #24 and 25 for a full financial accounting). And I want the money from the trust fund that CRI pays into at the state so I am assured that I will no longer have to negotiate with a person I was unsuccessful at negotiating with for eight years to try to get the education he was paid to give me.

Nothing will bring back the eight years of my life I lost to their greed and incompetence. Nothing can change the poor decision I made in trusting my future welfare to CRI – a school licensed and monitored by the Workforce Board in our state. My life has been irreparably harmed by this company in ways that I can never be compensated for – my self-esteem, my physical and mental health, and my future welfare have all been scarred by their lies. I entrusted my education to CRI and I was willfully failed by their school. Now I'm putting my trust in your hands to help me right the injustices they've heaped upon me through the falsity of their entire educational promise.

Please help me repair at least some of the damage CRI has caused. Help me move forward and leave this ugly chapter of my life behind. Thank you for your consideration; and I am ready and available to assist in answering any questions you may have or providing further detail and exhibits you may request regarding my complaint and my experiences with CRI.

Sincerely,

A large, dark, irregular redaction mark covering the signature area of the letter.